



State Council of
Higher Education for Virginia

Assessment of Opportunities and Models for Adults to Complete the Baccalaureate Degree at Virginia Four-Year Institutions

Presentation to the
Governor's Commission on Higher Education
Reform, Innovation and Investment

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Background

- SCHEV has been actively interested in addressing the needs of adult learners for a number of years
- Recent interests resulted in the creation of an online adult learner resource on SCHEV's website

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia

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Adults Completing Their Bachelor's Degree

A large number of Virginians were enrolled in college at some point in their lives but had to take time off from their academic pursuits for personal, financial, or professional reasons. The State Council of Higher Education has researched the availability of programs at Virginia public and private colleges designed for such persons who desire to return to college and complete their baccalaureate degree requirements. You are invited to find out more about them through the links provided in this webpage. Unlike traditional college programs, these programs emphasize flexibility to facilitate the working adult's ability to earn a degree. They typically offer conveniently scheduled classes and/or accelerated terms and they may also grant credit for a variety of past school or work experience. [Financial aid](#) may be available.

To read a brief description of each institution's program, click on [All Institutions offering Degree Completion Programs](#). To learn more about a particular program, click on the institution name and you will be taken directly to its webpage.

Perhaps you already have a good idea of what type of program will fit your needs. Use the other headings to the right to search for only programs that meet specific criteria. Search by region to find a campus close to where you live or work. If you need weekend and evening classes, or an online format, you can pull up only institutions with such offerings. Members of the military may want to use the

Program Listings

- [All Institutions offering Adult Education Programs](#)
- [Programs with Evening and/or Weekend Courses](#)
- [Programs with Online Courses](#)
- [Programs by Region](#)
- [Programs Certified by Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges](#)
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Background

College Access Challenge Grant Program (CACGP)

- The primary goal of the CACG Program is to create programming and initiatives that will significantly increase the number of under-represented students who enter and remain in post-secondary education.



Background

- September 2010 - Study of adult learners with “some college” approved in CACGP 2010-2011 proposal for \$35,000
- February 2011 - VATech’s Office of Economic Development was identified to conduct the research
- June 2011 - An advisory group of practitioners convened to help shape the research work to date

Background

- August 2011 – Final draft submitted
- September 2011 – Advisory group reconvened to provide input on draft
- October 2011 - Association of Virginia Independent Study Administrators provided input on recommendations
- October 2011 – Revision submitted
- December 2011 – Final draft submitted



Assessment of Opportunities and Models
for Adults to Complete the
Baccalaureate Degree at Virginia Four-
Year Institutions

Methodology

OED conducted research in the following areas to assess adult degree completion programs in Virginia:

- 1) Collection and analysis of demographic and educational attainment data;
- 2) Interviews with representatives of adult degree programs at Virginia universities and colleges; and
- 3) Identification of best practices for adult bachelor degree completion programs and related services.

Data and Key Findings

- Nearly 36% of working-age adults (25-64 years old) in Virginia have attained a bachelor's degree or higher. This proportion is significantly higher than the national average of 29.5%, ranking Virginia 6th in the nation.
- Virginia's relatively high state-wide bachelor's degree or higher educational attainment rate (36%) masks the significantly lower attainment rates of many of Virginia's rural regions, economically distressed urban areas and disparities among various demographic groups.
 - For example Greenville County has a rate of only 5.3%, whereas Falls Church has a rate of 73.5%

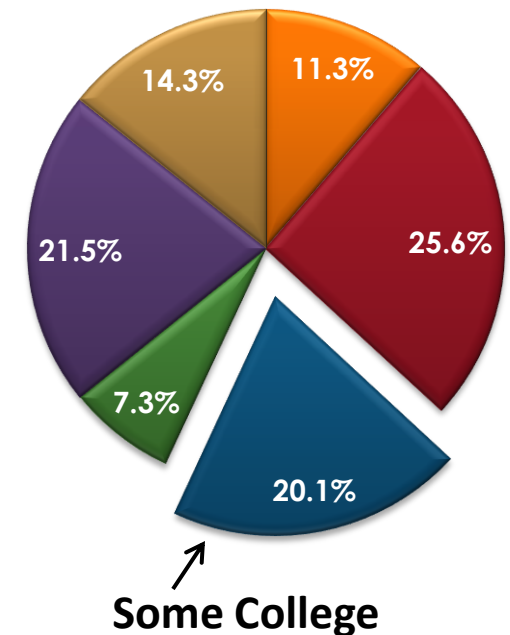
Data and Key Findings

- Between 2001 and fall 2009 the enrollment of adult learners increased by 34% with growth occurring primarily within programs at Virginia's private non-profit institutions.
- Most working-age adults attend public and private non-profit institutions part-time, whereas 82% of adult students at private for-profit schools attend full-time.

Data and Key Findings

Educational Attainment for Virginia, Population Age 25-64

Less than High School Diploma	471,351
High School Diploma/GED/Alternative	1,070,280
Some College	841,444
Associate Degree	305,729
Bachelor Degree	899,114
Advanced or Professional Degree	596,582



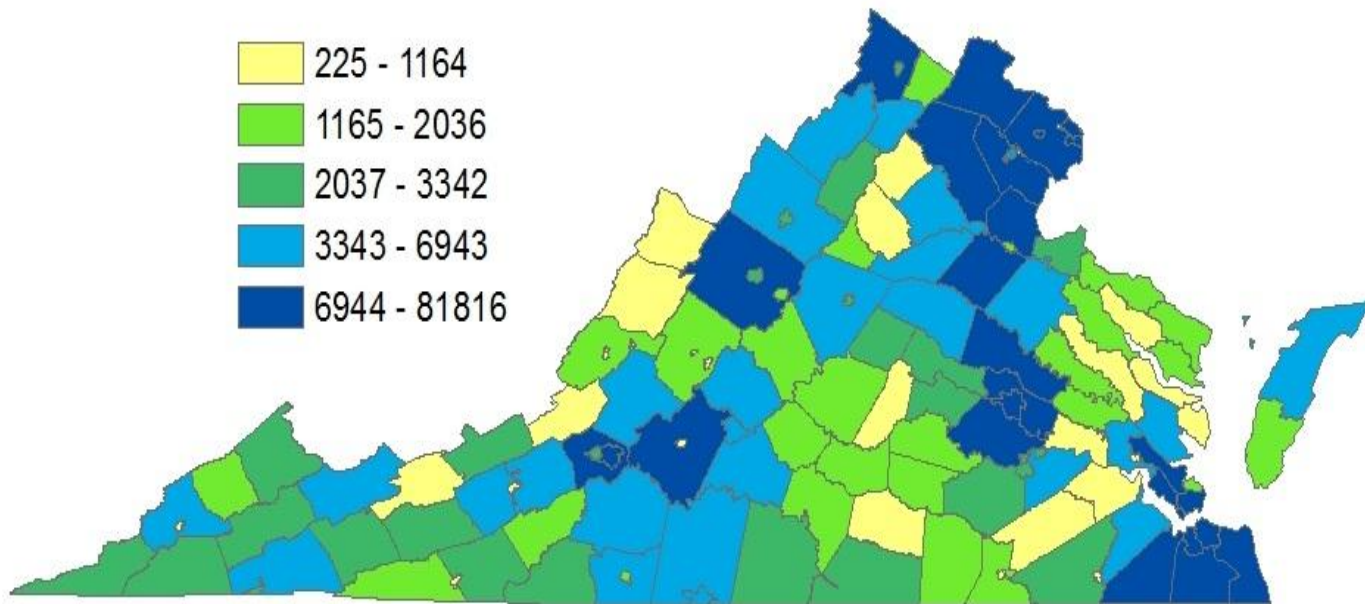
Data and Key Findings

- An estimated 70% of the “some college” population age 25 and above have one or more years of college and no degree.²
- Fairfax County (81,816), Virginia Beach (62,255), and Prince William County (42,986) have the state’s largest “some college” population pools.
 - Together, these three jurisdictions account for 22% of the statewide “some college” population.

Data and Key Findings

Estimate Headcount of Virginians with "Some College," Population Age 25-64

Population Count by County of Virginians with "Some College" Experience



American Community Survey, Five-Year Estimates: 2005-2009

Data and Key Findings

- Business Management/Marketing was the most popular subject of study for Academic Year 2009-10 adult completions.
- Affordability, proximity to programs, traditional course scheduling and access to support services are common barriers to degree completion for adult students.
- An estimated 66-68% of Virginia's adult students at public institutions submit FAFSA forms, compared to only 43% of adult learners at private non-profit institutions.

Promising Practices and Strategies

- Highlights statewide policies, examples of individual and statewide programs and initiatives.
- Best practices are categorized in topic areas such as:
 1. Affordability
 2. Incentives to Higher Education Institutions
 3. Accelerated Learning Programs
 4. Transfer Facilitation
 5. Prior Learning Assessment
 6. Support Counseling and Services
 7. English as a Second Language

Recommendations

- Recommendations reflect the input of an advisory group made up of Virginia workforce and adult higher education practitioners
- Recommendations were presented in three categories:

1. General

2. Affordability and Accessibility

3. Outreach and Marketing

Recommendations

General

- Designate a state-level position to serve as a central point of contact for institutions that provide adult degree programs
- Implement a pilot project to test strategies to tailor degree completion programs to the needs of regional residents and employers

Recommendations

Increase Affordability and Accessibility

- Standardize procedures for providing credits for 'prior work experience'
- Modify financial aid programs or create new programs which allow for increased eligibility for part-time students
- Modify curriculum and coursework requirements to shorten completion time

Recommendations

Increase Affordability and Accessibility (continued)

- Ensure that the counseling services and remedial skills development programs adequately prepare adult students for the standards of four-year institutions
- Improve the flexibility and “user-friendliness” of articulation agreements to respond to evolving industry and occupational outlooks
- Increase awareness of existing regional facilities with capacity to support distance learning activities

Recommendations

Increase Outreach and Marketing

- Identify “some college” students
- Provide students with information on the resources that are available
- Create “one-stop shops” that centralize degree completion resources, within higher education centers or in community centers of traditionally underserved communities.

Recommendations

Increase Outreach and Marketing (continued)

- Promote the use of the Virginia Education Wizard by adult workers and non-traditional students
- Identify and engage regional employers in targeted sectors, both public and private

Going Forward

- SCHEV has received approval for over \$200,000 to support adult learner initiatives through the 2011-12 CACGP
 - Proposed a competitive sub-granting of dollars to public and not-for-profit institutions to develop or improve programming based upon the recommendations and data
- Report will be made available for public use:
 - Statewide press release and fact sheet
 - Posted on SCHEV website
 - Create summary brochure to share with institutions
 - Print a limited number of bound copies of the study



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Thank You!

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